REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE DEAN RUSK
SECRETARY OF STATE
BEFORE THE UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL EDITORS
IN THE CONGRESSIONAL ROOM, STATLER-HILTON HOTEL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1965

RULES

The Secretary's opening remarks are ON THE RECORD.

The Question and Answer portion is BACKGROUND and may be attributed to U.S. officials (not high U.S. officials).

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MR. RESTON: Ladies and gentlemen, I am Scotty Reston. I don't really quite know why I am up here. I am pinch-hitting for Turner Catledge and his excuse for not being here is that he didn't have anything to do.

[Laughter]

But it is a great honor for me to introduce the Secretary of State. I will say just one thing about him. I have known him 25 years. He is, I think, one of the very few people that I have known who has been able to come to this town, work in all branches of the Government, at all levels of the Government, and still remain the country boy he was when he came out of Georgia.

There have been only nine Secretaries of State who have actually served in this first post of the Cabinet longer than Dean Rusk. They are Mr. Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, John Forsyth, William Seward, Hamilton Fish, John Hay, Cordell Hull, and John Foster Dulles.

I don't know what that proves, Dean, but anyway he has learned to suffer fools gladly in this town.

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including a lot in our own profession, and I'll give him to you now. Mr. Secretary of State.

[Applause.]

MR. RUSK: Thank you, very much.

Mr. Reston, Mr. Thomason, ladies and gentlemen: I'm very glad to be with you for a while this afternoon. I'm just down for a few hours from the United Nations. We'll be going back at the end of the day or early in the morning, but I would like very much to have a chance to run over some of our problems.

I think what I might do is to comment very briefly and informally on certain matters and then, if our colleagues will cooperate, go BACKGROUND for your questions and [to] build my remarks basically upon your questions.

I'd like to go BACKGROUND because there are very few secrets when we can talk among Americans and [so] with large audiences of other sorts listening in abroad, so it isn't always easy to talk about all of our problems in the way that we would like to when we have a small group together.

Let me report that the general atmosphere at the General Assembly is one of moderation and of a certain hope, perhaps cautious optimism. I think this comes from a number of factors.

First, there seems to be rather general appreciation for the fact that the General Assembly is back

in business. We had a considerable problem last year over the financing issue. We, ourselves, were disappointed that the General Assembly seemed to be unready to support its prerogatives under the Charter as fully and as strongly as the Charter apparently contemplated. But nevertheless it was concluded that the world is too dangerous and too complicated for the main body of the United Nations, the General Assembly, not to be in session. And so we and others opened the way for that and it is -- the Assembly now is there facing more than a hundred items on its agenda.

I think it's also important that there has come to be a tradition that the Foreign Ministers of the world gather at the General Assembly for the first two or three weeks. There are more than 70 Foreign Ministers there now and during the period of some ten days to two weeks, I shall have the privilege of meeting with most of them and they among themselves with each other.

This is extremely helpful, not only from the point of view of personal relationships, but also because it does give the General Assembly a chance to operate somewhat as a banking clearing house, where everyone can come together and talk over with each other a very large number of bilateral as well as multilateral issues.

And one finds year by year that there develops a certain corporate sense among the Foreign Ministers, a certain corporate sense of responsibility which has, I think, on the whole a moderating and I think wholesome influence on policy.

I think it's also true that the United Nations has taken some encouragement from the fact that the Security Council has recently moved with unanimity to take at least some of the danger out of the India-Pakistan conflict. That situation is by no means resolved. There is still shooting. There are still very great dangers in it. We are some time away from any possibility of permanent peace there in the subcontinent.

But, nevertheless, the Security Council, with the unanimity particularly of its permanent members, did move to bring the fighting to a standstill, and it's now still working on it to try to improve the situation.

I think that this was impressive to the parties. It was impressive to the U. N. membership generally.

I think one can also report that my discussions with Foreign Ministers have led me to the conclusion that there is now a general recognition around the world that the problem of peace in Southeast Asia is not in Washington, that the obstacle to peace is not the United States, that

we have not only joined in efforts made by others, individually and in various groups, such as the Commonwealth or the 17 nonaligned nations, but that we, as a nation, acting in our own unilateral capacity, made it clear that we would be in Geneva tonight, tomorrow afternoon, if there were anyone there to talk to about peace in Southeast Asia, and that the obstacle to peace lies in Hanoi and Peiping.

And finally in terms of general atmosphere, I would say that the day yesterday was a very inspiring and very remarkable day. New York, and the United Nations have never seen anything quite like the visit of this eminent and dedicated man, Pope Paul. His appearance at the United Nations was received with profound interest and respect and it cast a tolerant atmosphere in the proceedings which I think cannot help but have a valuable effect on the total situation.

Now, the Assembly has, as I say, over a hundred items on its agenda. It has a hundred seventeen members. That means tens of thousands of primary votes cast by the members on all of the major issues before the world, and it is now settling down in its Committees to get on with its task.

It will be looking at a world situation which is turbulent, not only today, but promises to be turbulent

indefinitely and into the future.

There are a hundred and seventeen members of the Assembly. We have relations with most of them. Among the countries with whom we have relations, there will be in this calendar year elections or changes of government in at least 45 or 50 of them. That happens in every calendar year throughout this postwar period, and we can expect it to continue right on into the future.

In those 45 or 50 changes, there will be a dozen or so that will occur without being scheduled, not through electoral processes, changes which do affect the interests of the United States, as well as those of other countries.

I think we can say quite accurately that the central issue of peace in this postwar period has been the underlying crisis between those who wish to build the kind of world set forth in the United Nations Charter and those who are trying to recast that world in terms of what they call their "world revolution." That is the contest between a world of law, of independent nations, a world of peaceful settlement, and a world of Communist organization.

At the present time, that breaks itself up into several components. I think that at the present moment one would say that the overhanging problem of peace is the policy of Peiping. It is Peiping that has announced its policy of world revolution, with a militancy which has caused very great issues within the Communist world, quite apart from the issues that it causes for the Free World.

It is Peiping that, through its Defense Minister, indicated in early September that they thought that the revisionists, meaning the Russians, took too gloomy a view of war. We, ourselves, are not revisionists, but we, I must say, take a very gloomy view of war, and we think that the rest of the human race had better do the same thing.

Peiping expressed some of the violence of its approach in its doctrine through the extraordinary four-hour press conference by Mr. Chen Yi just last week, a press conference that made a profound impression upon the membership of the United Nations, not only because it attacked almost everyone else in the world except North Korea and North Viet-Nam, but also attacked the United Nations, attacked the basis of the Afro-Asian Conference now projected for Algiers in November, and made it very clear that the rest of the world has a major problem in the policy of the people who are living there in Peiping.

I can tell you quite frankly that we feel that it is Peiping that stands across the path of peaceful settlement of the Southeast Asian problem; that it is Peiping that is charging even the Soviet Union with assisting Hanoi in order to sell out Hanoi to the United States; that it is Peiping that calls the British Prime Minister a nitwit when he organizes a committee of the Commonwealth trying to explore the possibilities of peace

in Southeast Asia.

And so the great question we have in front of us in the years ahead within this next decade is the question as to whether Peiping is going to pursue a policy of militancy with every means at its disposal or whether somehow it can be brought to realize that it is on the wrong track and that it must, by force, if not by commitment, through necessity, if not by persuasion, try to find its way back toward something called a peaceful coexistence and give some real content to that particular approach to the rest of the world.

As far as we are concerned, the most dangerous issue, as far as our own national involvement is concerned, continues to be the situation in Viet-Nam. The essential facts are that there are tens of thousands of infiltrators sent from North Viet-Nam to South Viet-Nam to take over that country by force.

If you have any doubts about those facts, those can be readily ascertained by both governmental and independent means.

We have a commitment to South Viet-Nam, a commitment that has existed for many years, through many forms, through the actions of many Presidents, the actions of the Congress, the Treaty power, the public declarations of our purpose and our intentions over a long number of years.

However one wants to parse the exact character of that commitment, we know we have it and the Communists know we have it and the rest of the world knows we have it. That means, therefore, that we better look to the integrity of that commitment, because, as I have indicated many times before, the integrity of the American commitment and these arrangements in different parts of the world is a principal pillar of peace in this present world situation.

And if the other side should discover that that commitment is not worth very much, then we and others would be subjected to dangers that we have not yet begun to dream of.

And so we have that commitment and we are going to meet it, but it is also true that we are prepared to bring that matter to a peaceful conclusion just as quickly as possible.

We have somewhat more than a hundred twenty-five thousand men there. They are men who could come home literally tomorrow if the North would quit doing what it is -- what they are trying to do to the South, and if the South Vietnamese would be permitted to work out their own future as they, themselves, wish to work it out without having that future imposed upon them by force from the outside.

And so we have tried to use the machinery of the Geneva Conference, the machinery of the United Nations,

and the assistance of the 17 nonaligned nations, or the proposals of the President of India, or the Commonwealth Committee, and of various intermediaries, some known publicly, some not known, who have attempted to establish contact to find out the basis on which peace could be established.

In the process, we have made it clear that we have no special national purpose in Southeast Asia in terms of bases or permanent military position, but what we want is peace. And we believe that peace can only be built if smaller nations have a chance to live in safety and independence, even though they are within the reach of the great powers.

And so that is the problem, tragic as it is, in the 1960's, that we face once again after two decades of similar efforts since 1945, once more a crisis caused by the application of force for aggressive purposes, once more a situation calling upon us to bear some burdens and to pay some prices and call upon our young men in cold blood to face dangers in the interest of preserving the peace.

This has been a process in which we have spent a hundred sixty thousand casualties since 1945. It is a process that has kept many a small country from being overwhelmed by force, and it has also kept the world from moving

toward the certainty of a great catastrophe which the world could not possibly survive in any real sense of the term.

But in meeting these various attempts at aggression since 1945, we have tried to act with caution and prudence as well as firmness, because we recognize that we have an obligation along with others to stay away from the slippery slope that leads to World War III. And so we have not escalated, as the present expression is, as rapidly as some would like.

We used an airlift in Berlin without engaging major ground forces to reopen Berlin in the 1940's. We had a nuclear monopoly at the time of the Korean War and did not use nuclear weapons in that enterprise. President Kennedy handled the Cuban missile crisis with the greatest care in order to leave open the doors of peaceful settlement of that problem. We waited more than four years after Northern infiltration into South Viet-Nam before we resorted to strikes against the North.

And if there are those of you -- among you who feel there has been too much patience and too much restraint, let me close before I turn to your questions with a very simple fact which you ought to have deeply in your hearts if you are to understand the world in which we live.

We came out of World War II trying to draw the lessons from it and wrote the Charter of the United Nations

along with many other governments. That Charter represents the lessons we learned. And we had paid a very heavy price for those lessons. But, Gentlemen, we shall not have that chance again. We shall not have a chance to draw the lessons from World War III and try to build again, so we had better cherish those we have already found in the Charter of the United Nations and learn to live with restraint and learn to solve our problems by peaceful means and learn not to permit courses of aggression to gather momentum and try to find a way to build steadily the rule of law and to ~~be a~~ REACH ACCOMODATION in cooperation with the nations of the world. Because we are at a point quite literally, and Pope Paul yesterday reminded us of President Kennedy's words in that respect, that if we do not succeed in mastering war, that war will destroy us all.

So that is the purpose of our exercise. That is the purpose of our effort, the purpose of our policy. And on that we would like to ask your interest and assure you that we shall be ready to do anything that we can to be helpful to you in your attempt to get at the facts and get them before the American people.

I thank you very much and perhaps we can now turn to some of your questions on particular points.

[Applause.]

Q Mr. Secretary, you mentioned in your speech about preserving the peace and, of course, the purpose of the Pope's visit here yesterday was preserving the peace, and in the paper --

MR. RUSK: This is for BACKGROUND.

Q -- in the paper this morning said -- another surprise was the Pope's implicit suggestion that China be admitted to the World Forum. What is your reaction to that?

A Well, there was some discussion about universality, but it was qualified rather carefully and I'm not going to take up that question in terms of analyzing in detail what His Holiness may have said about it.

Let me tell you what we think about it at the present time. We believe that it is very important that every possible influence be brought to bear upon the judgments which Peiping must make about whether they are on the right track. It seems to us that anything which encourages them to believe that their present policy is correct, pushes them more toward war in the present world situation.

This is one of the difficulties we had with the French recognition of Peiping, not because France as an ally adopted an attitude or a policy which was contrary

to our own. We were concerned about its effect in Peiping.

We feel that if the United Nations, under the present circumstances, should admit Peiping to membership, that this would be registered in Peiping as an acclamation of support for their present policy and their present attitude.

They have been offered the path of peaceful coexistence in many situations. They refused, for example, to renounce force in the Formosa Straits. Our own contacts with Peiping run in accordance with a familiar pattern. We have now had a hundred twenty-seven discussions with them in the last ten years, the last one about ten days or two weeks ago.

Our problem with them is not lack of contact. We have a lot of contact. The problem is that with contact we don't like what we find out, because on their side they open with a simple statement that there is nothing to discuss unless we are prepared to surrender Formosa, and when we say we cannot surrender eleven million people contrary to their wishes, then the situation becomes adamant, difficult, and in accordance with well-known public positions.

So the key question here is how to bring Peiping to revise its policy.

As far as its admission to the United Nations is

concerned, I doubt very much they would come into the U. N. unless the U. N. expelled Formosa. And we see no inclination on the part of the majority of the United Nations to expel the Republic of China or Formosa.

And, indeed, Mr. Chen Yi said the other day that before they came in the U. N. would have to be basically reorganized, and he specifically pointed out that they would have to get rid of the imperialist puppets and have only the truly good people members in effect in the United Nations body. So I think that it was made pretty clear by him to the membership there that they are not prepared to work very hard toward admission to the world body.

Yes, sir?

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[A Section - GWH